How SRA Orients Reviewers

- SRA = Scientific Review Administrator
- Very careful reading of RFA.
- Annotated copy of RFA provided.
- Key words and phrases underlined.
- Following slides will include examples of some key issues.

Reading RFA

- Underline imperatives (must, should, etc.)

  Number of “must”s: 80

  Number of “should”s: 44

  Many shoulds appear very important.
- Note logical flow and overall purpose of proposed research.
- Think about how reviewers, your primary audience, will review applications.

What Kinds of Studies Are Not Appropriate for RFA-CA-07-012?

- Research on fundamental cellular and molecular mechanisms of cancer.
- Biomarker discovery.
- Development of new technologies or advanced applications of existing technologies.
- Studies involving 2-D PAGE.
- Studies involving surface-enhanced laser desorption ionization (SELDI) mass spectrometry.
- Cell lysates or culture media as representative of clinical cancer samples.

Where Should Description of Technologies Be Placed?

- Avoid use of RESOURCES section of PHS 398 application.
- Instead, describe technologies in the appropriate section of the Research Plan (pages 15-17 of RFA): Section 1, last bulleted item.
- Allowance of 75 pages for the Research Plan should be sufficient.
- Avoid temptation to use the RESOURCES section to circumvent the 75 page limit.

How Important Are the Data and Resource Sharing Plans?

- Extremely important because sharing among the CPTACs and with the scientific community is emphasized repeatedly, ~50 and 25 times, respectively.
- Reviewers are expected to factor their judgments of the data sharing plan into their priority scores.
- Program staff will consider the adequacy of both plans before making awards.

Are Capital Equipment Purchases Allowed?

- No, equipment items costing more than $__ is not allowed.
- The capital equipment required to perform the proposed research must be on hand by the start date of a grant.

How Should the Application Be Organized?

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow the outline on pages 16-17 as closely as possible to facilitate the review of the applications.
- Section 2 on page 16 should follow the organization of the “Requirements and Obligations” spelled out on pages 7-10 of the RFA.

Why Follow the Recommended Organization?

- The logical flow that is outlined will make your application easier to review.
- Deviations from the recommended flow may confuse reviewers.

Kinds of Samples to Be Analyzed

- Reference standards.
- Common mouse model of cancer.
- Mouse model for clinical cancer types.
- Human cancer samples from one to three cancer types.
- Human control samples.
- Plasma vs. serum vs. other fluids vs. tissue.
- Samples from other CPTACs.

Numbers of Samples to Be Analyzed

- At least 200 clinical samples per cancer type.
- Appropriate numbers of controls.
- Other numbers not specified, so provide appropriate numbers and rationale.
- Note requirement to share aliquots of samples with other CPTACs and scientific community.
- Provide strong biostatistics and bioinformatics rationales.

Analytical Capacity

- Need sufficient “instrumentation capacity” to analyze the proposed numbers of samples.
- Don’t forget to consider technologies based on affinity capture!

Prospective Reviewers

- Applicants responding to either RFA-CA-07-005 or -012
- Invited speakers at recent proteomics meetings
- Individuals with proteomics expertise listed in NIH databases